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ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

APRIL, 1852.

PACIFIC VICTORY OF FREEDOM.

THE present condition of Europe is awfully portentous. The triumphant establishment of despotisms so rigorous as to overcome the strong love of country and home, and expel myriads over a vast ocean to unknown and distant regions, so hollow and distrustful as to impose reluctant silence on the press and the tongue, and to require vigilance and cruel punishments for its maintenance, cannot be enduring in a civilized age. It must either go on to an unlimited tyranny, crushing out the very heart of liberty and eye of knowledge in the people, subjecting all, as automata, to a single will, and carrying back political communities into pristine barbarism, or be overthrown by a revolution which shall bury all the thrones and institutions of present power in undistinguishing ruin.

It cannot be denied, that this state of things is a perplexing one to the friends of peace; and at no time has the temptation been so strong to depart from their cherished principles. In common with most of our countrymen, our hearts are imbued with the love of constitutional liberty, on which our Republic is founded. We sympathize with the oppressed people of every land, and revolt at the usurpation of power which overrides alike freedom, justice, and humanity. Indeed, the very zeal of philanthropy which has brought us into antagonism with the reigning powers and principalities of earth, the long-established, deep-rooted, and universal martial prejudices and customs of the world, in favor of the pacific harmony and Christian brotherhood of mankind, has inclined us, more than others, to deprecate that reign of military force, by which all our prospects of universal peace and love are neutralized. We repel, with contempt, the flippant allegation, that, in declining armed resistance, we are insensible to human wrongs.

On the other hand, we cannot conceal from ourselves the perception, that the mass of the people of civilized nations are not yet sufficiently christianized to seek their deliverance from oppression by the true and only effectual method of the Gospel. The great multitude, and even the most eminent and enlightened statesmen, have yet no other idea of a revolution than that which is to be effected by force of arms. As this is the only method of emancipation which can be expected at the present time, the friends of peace, by discouraging that method, would seem to be ranging themselves

on the side of despotism. Indeed, it is to be feared that many sincere adherents to the cause of peace, taking that ground, have thought it necessary to put in abeyance the cardinal doctrines of peace, and to give their aid to present martial redress, under the strangely fallacious expectation, that deliverance by war is to put an end to war; and victory by military force, is to destroy all military establishments.

We are guided through this dilemma by the consideration, that, in the order of Providence, beneficent objects are permitted to be accomplished by evil instrumentalities, although the followers of Christ are forbidden to participate in them. In the imperfect light of the present day, deliverance from the oppressive and debasing despots of Europe will doubtless be attempted through the slaughters, crimes, and miseries of war; and the actors in these scenes, believing that their course is compatible with the religion they profess, are not distinctly conscious of the real sin they commit; but to this course, the more enlightened friends of peace can give no aid without conscious criminality. If, as seems probable, the bloody scenes of battle must again be enacted, they will be as anxious as others, that freedom and justice may prevail, and their withholding of forbidden aid will not be inconsistent with their ardent desires for human deliverance and elevation by any means which Divine Providence may permit.

Still we may indulge the wish, that this sanguinary conflict may not occur; for after all the vast increase of sorrow and depravity it will occasion, revolutionists, if successful, will be far from attaining the freedom they desire. A change of government, effected by military force, must make permanent that force for its security, and military tyranny will thus be perpetuated. The heart-burnings of defeated antagonists, and the martial spirit in all, will not be allayed, and the advance of Christian love and brotherhood on earth will be immeasurably protracted. Shall we then permit the despots of the world quietly to strengthen and augment their tyranny? No; the true march of freedom is over a purer, a safer, a bloodless road. Leave the weapons of violence, and bring the higher law of heavenly love into conflict with the laws of human corruption! Let the non-resisting disobedience of the early Christian martyrs, or the later Friends and Moravians, be extensively practiced; and the conquest of liberty over despotism, though doubtless more slow, will be more harmless, more certain, and more complete. It will be a victory, not over bloody corpses, but living hearts; a peace unguarded, secure, universal, perpetual.

It has been said, that this course is not to be expected now. Still it should be presented and urged by the friends of peace; for, by prophetic authority, and angelic annunciation, we are assured of its ultimate adoption. The nations of the world, now maddened with martial enthusiasm, will recognize it when humbled by the ruinous experience of the fatality of war. The seed of forbearing love which we would now plant in every Christian heart, will grow till it overshadows the kingdoms of the earth, giving its healing balm to the wounded nations, and uniting all in affectionate brotherhood, when the sound of war shall forever have passed away from human ears, and its record be found only on the pages of history. J. P. B.

The largest battering-rams of the ancients were about equal in force to a 39lb. shot from a cannon.